



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

DECORATION OF A NEW-BUILT HOUSE. — In Montclair, N. J., and vicinity, it is customary to fasten a green bough or a small tree to the end of the ridgepole of a house as soon as the frame is fairly up, and to keep it there until the house is finished. Sometimes rhododendron (?) is used, sometimes a small fir-tree.

Margaret C. Whiting.

INDUCTION OF WOMEN INTO IROQUOIS TRIBES.

To the Editor of the Journal of American Folk-Lore:

In reference to the letter of Mrs. Sara L. Lee in "Notes and Queries" of your December number, may I, in reply, offer an explanation?

The discussion comes of misunderstanding the various degrees of induction into an Indian tribe. Each tribe or nation of the Iroquois Indians is subdivided into clans. Of these the Senecas have eight, — Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Turtle, Deer, Hawk, Plover (or Snipe), and Heron. Each clan has the right of "adopting" — subject to loyalty and repudiation for misbehavior — any "foreigner" they may choose. This adoption is not legally recognized by the nation.

A national or tribal adoption is of so rare occurrence that it becomes history.

As a question of actual precedence, the *first* white woman adopted by any one of the Iroquois tribes or nations was Mary Jamison, the famous captive taken during the Revolutionary War, and inducted into the Seneca nation. This woman of history, refusing release, became absorbed into the nation, and, as their faithful interpreter, served in many important treaties. Her descendants to this day number among the best of the families of the Iroquois Indians.

Since the adoption of Mary Jamison, even to the present time, it has been a common occurrence for the *clans* of the various tribes to admit both white men and women as associate members thereof.

Following the adoption by the Seneca Indians of my grandfather in 1792, also that of my father in 1804, I was admitted into the "Snipe" *clan* of the Seneca tribe in 1881, becoming thereby, as member of the descendant family of Red Jacket, a great-granddaughter of this distinguished Seneca orator.

In March, 1891, the Seneca *tribe* invited me to their government council-house, and there adopted me a member of their tribe.

This national adoption was ratified at the "League" council-house of the Six Nations at Onondaga in April, 1891, when the "Head Sachems" of the Six Nations of the Iroquois received me as a member of the League, and as the first white woman who had received this honor.

In September, 1892, at the Six Nation Condolence Meeting held at the Tonawanda Reservation, the occasion of their making new chiefs, I was further "bestowed" as a chief of the Six Nations, — Senecas, Onondagas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, and Tuscaroras, — a title never before conferred upon either a white or Indian woman.

I should add that when I was adopted by the Seneca *tribe*, I was com-

pelled to "surrender" my *clan* or family name, Ga-ya-nis-ha-oh (The bearer of the law), and assume my "new" or tribal name, Ya-ie-wa-noh (The watcher for the people). I was also permitted to retain this name in my chieftainship.

These fast-passing honors of the Indians may seem empty and useless to those who do not comprehend Indian law, language, or religion. Between the Iroquois Indians and myself they serve as a compact of friendship and honor that is sacred and precious to me. In my national and home-life association with the Iroquois I have learned their value.

It is a well-known fact that the late Mrs. Erminnie Smith was adopted into the Bear *clan* of the Tuscarora tribe by one of its several chiefs, who made her his sister. I have not seen a record of her adoption by the Tuscarora *tribe*.

In further explanation I would say that the differences of adoption by the Iroquois Indians are decidedly distinctive, thus:—

(1) "*A name given*;" a graceful courtesy which bestows some euphonious name upon the bearer, to whom no further claim on the people is given.

(2) "*A family adoption*;" an honor of hospitality, by which the recipient is given the name, and assumes the place in the family, of some deceased member thereof.

(3) "*A clan adoption*;" a yet higher order of membership, by which the recipient becomes a "family" sister of one of the chiefs, also a sister to each member of the clan.

(4) "*A national or tribal adoption*;" the highest honor that an *individual tribe* or *nation* can bestow.

(5) "*A League adoption*;" the greatest elevation (the "highest lift"), by which the recipient becomes an actual member of *all* the six tribes of the Ho-de-no-sau-ne, or League of the Iroquois.

I would mention that my friend, the lamented Mrs. Asher Wright, was made a *tribal* member of the Senecas in 1834. Mrs. Wright was missionary among the Senecas fifty-three years, and in conjunction with her husband, also a missionary, translated into the Seneca language the Seneca hymn-book, compiled the Seneca grammar, and other works of great value to her Indian school.

It has seemed a necessity for me to elaborate, and you will pardon me. The question needs a detailed explanation to clear the misunderstood "adopted by the Indians,"—a phrase very frequent to me, upon investigating which I usually find the "adoption" merely the friendliness of some Indian or Indians who have given to a white man or woman a pretty name,—"*Floating Cloud*," "*Beautiful Sky*," etc., or any other than a *clan* name.

In conclusion, may I say that my clan and national adoption, also my chieftainship, are legally recognized by the Canadian Iroquois Indians, who have presented me, as further ratification, with a belt of wampum.

Cordially yours,

Harriet Maxwell Converse.

NEW YORK, *February*, 1893.